

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 03606 200322Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03
ACDA-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06
TRSE-00 DODE-00 /066 W
-----200334Z 095830 /12

R 200132Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO USMISSION NATO
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 455
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
USNMR SHAPE BE
CINCPAC

CONFIDENTIAL CANBERRA 3606

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, AS
SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER FRASER'S VISIT TO NATO

REF: NATO 3592

1. PRIME MINISTER FRASER RAISED THE SUBJECT OF NATO AND HIS IMPENDING VISIT TO NATO HEADQUARTERS DURING A LONG MEETING I HAD WITH HIM ON MAY 18. FRASER SAID THAT HIS INTEREST IN EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE MATTERS DATED FROM THE PERIOD WHEN HE SERVED AS AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER IN THE 1960'S ADMITTING THAT HE DID NOT HAVE DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT FORCE LEVELS AND CAPABILITIES OF THE ALLIES AND THE SOVIET BLOC, HE TOOK A VERY PESSIMISTIC VIEW CONCERNING NATO'S ABILITY TO RESIST ANY RUSSIAN ATTACK WITH CONVENTIONAL ARMS. IN FRAWER'S VIEW "UNLESS THE WEST USES TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS AT THE BEGINNING OF HOSTILITIES NOTHING WOULD PREVENT THE USSR FROM REACHING THE ATLANTIC IN TWO WEEKS TIME."

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2. FRASER IS A DEEPLY CONSERVATIVE MAN WITH A STRONG BIAS AGAINST THE USSR. HE IS CONCERNED THAT WESTERN NATIONS ARE BEING TAKEN IN BY THE SOVIETS IN DISARMAMENT TALKS. HE ALSO HAS STRONG DOUBTS WHETHER THE WEST HAS THE WILL TO CONTINUE RESISTANCE TO WHAT FRASER BELIEVES TO BE THE CONSTANT AND UNCHANGING SOVIET EFFORT TO DOMINATE WESTERN EUROPE.

3. FRASER WILL BE INTERESTED IN ALL ASPECTS OF NATO DEFENSE EMPHASIZING CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITIES. HE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE A DETAILED BRIEFING ON HOW NATO VIEWS THE INDIAN OCEAN.

4. THE PRIME MINISTER HAS SHOWN SOME SENSITIVITY IN THE PAST TO WHAT HE CONSIDERS TO BE THE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT THE US ACCORDS NATO NATIONS IN COMPARISON WITH THE TREATMENT AUSTRALIA RECEIVES. IT WAS FRASER'S DECISION TO SEEK CLOSER -ALBEIT ILL-DEFINED- AUSTRALIAN LINKS WITH NATO. HE SEES HIS JUNE 17 MEETINGS WITH SYG LUNS AND GEN. HAIG AS IMPORTANT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CLOSER AUSTRALIAN-NATO RELATIONSHIP.

ALSTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decapton Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CANBER03606
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770179-0871
Format: TEL
From: CANBERRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770537/aaaabfol.tel
Line Count: 77
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3135408f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 NATO BRUSSELS 3592
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2442461
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIME MINISTER FRASER'S VISIT TO NATO
TAGS: PFOR, AS, NATO, (FRASER, J MALCOLM)
To: NATO BRUSSELS
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3135408f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009